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SIPDIS

STATE FOR ECA/PE/V/R/E: DDOUGLAS; ECA/PE/V/F/E: ECONNOLLY;
EUR/PPD: CTEAL

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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: KPAO OEXC SCUL TU
SUBJECT: EVALUATION: Voluntary Visitor Project for the
Diyarbakir Municipality

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY: In line with the travel of
Diyarbakir Mayor Osman Baydemir and three members of his
staff to the US for a conference and consultations with the
UNDP, the voluntary visitor office organized a project on
migrant issues and diversity in municipal administration.
The objectives of the two-day visit to Nashville were to
learn about municipal administration in the U.S. and to
explore the possibility of establishing sister city ties.
In Nashville the visitors examined the City's experience
with the integration of minority and refugee communities.

DATE, FISCAL YEAR, AND QUARTER: February 14 - 15, 2006; FY
2006; Second Quarter

JUSTIFICATION AND MPP OBJECTIVE: In the words of the
current Prime Minister, "Turkey's road to the EU runs
through Diyarbakir." The southeastern region is a major
focus of Post's effort to bolster civic consciousness and
human rights. As decentralization continues, mayors of
regional centers like Diyarbakir will be given more
authority to reach out to their constituents and deal with
their local needs. In the case of Diyarbakir, this means
integration of Turkish and Kurdish communities and dealing
with migrant/refugee communities. These officials often
lack formal training, experience, or context to deal with
these multifaceted issues. The mayor's office reached out
to Consulate Adana for assistance with setting up a sister
city relationship and also to gain perspectives on the US
administrative model. The Governor of Diyarbakir
participated in an IVLP program in February 2006 -
capitalizing on the Mayor's presence in the US doubled the
impact of this program.

RESULTS/IMPACT: Diyarbakir Mayor Osman Baydemir found the
party's trip to Nashville "excellently organized" and highly
informative. He greatly appreciated the opportunity to meet
with the Mayor of Nashville and members of the City Council,
calling their discussion "intimate and important". The
group discussed various strategies they had used in
attracting investment to their cities. Baydemir said he
would use some of these strategies to "realize Diyarbakir's
full potential" in the future. The group also discussed
separation of powers between the city, state, and federal
level. Baydemir was impressed by the freedom local
administrators had to pursue their own goals and interests.

A sister city relationship was also discussed, Baydemir
invited Nashville officials to Diyarbakir and remarked that
"talks are ongoing" about the establishment of a formal
sister city relationship.

Visits to local schools and police stations were eye opening
for the group. Baydemir was in particular interested in the

idea of integrating migrants through education, which he saw firsthand through the children of Nashville's significant Kurdish community. During a visit to a local police station, the group was very interested in local government structures. Baydemir was unaware that the US had no national police force, and that city police forces are run by municipal authorities.

NON-USG SOURCES OF IN-COUNTRY FUNDING/IN-KIND SUPPORT AND AMOUNT: The Mayor and his staff traveled to the US for the International Municipalities Conference in Washington DC and consultations with the UN Development Program. The Turkish government funded this part of their trip. The participants also covered internal airfare to Nashville, hotel accommodation, and their expenses.

QUALITY OF U.S. SUPPORT AND AGENCY OFFICE: Baydemir said that the program was "excellently organized", and Post agrees. This is due to the efforts of program officer Paul Engelstad, who had to cope with numerous last-minute requests from the group.

WILSON